

Eimer Duffy is a Social Media Consultant and Trainer at FIT Social Media. She provides customised social media solutions for businesses which require an emotional and compassionate tone of voice to their online presence helping them to gain more visibility, get noticed and build trust online. She co-hosts the only social media for business radio show in Ireland called “The Let’s Get Social Show” every Friday at 2pm on Dublin South FM.



The importance of being online

A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of interviewing Mary Cunniffe, former President of The Irish Association of Funeral Directors and Branch Manager of Massey Brothers Funeral Directors with Colm Kieran who is Funeral Care and Communications Consultant at Funeral Director Solutions, Ireland’s specialist web design and digital marketing service for Funeral Directors. He is also General Manager at Kieran Brothers Funeral Care and has been Public Relations Officer for The Irish Association of Funeral Directors. During the interview we discussed how the Funeral Industry has made strides with being online and how it has embraced the importance of being online with things such as having a well-designed website and active social channels.

From the conversation we had on the show, it got me thinking about a friend of mine who in the last year, lost both her parents and her favourite aunt. She hadn’t organised a funeral before and wasn’t sure about what the funeral process was and which provider to choose. She told me her first port of call was on Google as she did not live in the area where her parents and aunt lived. From Google, she had to go onto Google Maps to gain an understanding of who was out there and then check out each of the funeral directors listing on Google. From there, she explored their websites, social media and looked up their reviews and there then she made her decision.

I thought back to when my Grandmother died back in the ‘90s and we all lived nearby and the process of organising her funeral was more straightforward, as we had friends and neighbours to advise on this and the Golden/Yellow Pages to acquire contact information.

Times have certainly changed and more and more people are living further away, and so now

rely on using Google to do their research. Also, using social media to stay connected locally and with family and friends. And this has become invaluable; especially if there is a death, and people are using social media more and more to announce to their family and friends, this then leads people to check out further information via death notices online.

As you know Covid19 has taught us quite a lot. We have all had to go online for things we wouldn’t have normally have had to consider. This is why it is so imperative to be online as a business these days; by having a Google listing, a website and the right social media channels all fully up to date and presentable. Your online presence is just as important as your physical day to day presence. Being able to manage this and finding the time can seem daunting, but it can be done with the right processes and plans. So what do you really need when it comes to being online?

When it comes to being on the right platforms, Google is number one, so it is necessary to be

listed via Google My Business. This is a free tool that allows you to promote your business profile on Google Search and Maps. With your Google listing, you will raise your profile locally, connect with your customers, post updates and see how customers are interacting with your business on Google with things such as leaving reviews.

The next thing to have is a fully SEO’d and mobile responsive website with eCommerce functionality.. This is your shop window and where people need to be able to find out more about you and your business, what you offer, how to contact you and how you can assist them. Having a good customer experience of your website and being able to navigate it easily will encourage people to stay on your website longer and help them to decide their next step.

From there, being on the right social media channels, with fully completed channels (first impressions last), which your audience and customers are on; such as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn is vital. Social media is 24/7 and being contactable via social media messaging is just one aspect. People will search on these social channels also for information and look at your content. When it comes to content, things such as crafting the right tone of voice, empathetic content (such as blogs, images, video etc) which are in keeping with the respectful nature of your business and posting consistently are so important, and this is where a content calendar is key. And, as it’s social

media, being sociable with your audience will help them to get to know, like and trust your business.

One other aspect of social media which has come to the forefront, is live streaming of funerals, especially on Facebook and Instagram. This has become a lifeline for people who are living abroad and can’t make the funeral service or cemetery, and so this enables them to attend online via these platforms to pay their respects to loved ones, family and friends. Being able to tune into a Facebook or Instagram LIVE brings them comfort.

All in all, going forward, it is necessary to be online. This will open up your business to be seen as even more approachable, allowing you to showcase your business and services, engage and be social with your customers in an empathetic light. Helping you gain further visibility, credibility and build trust with customers locally and worldwide.

To hear the interview with Mary Cunniffe and Colm Kieran you can catch it now on podcast on “The Let’s Get Social Show” Episode 72 on Podbean, iTunes, Spotify and The Dublin South FM podcast page.

Eimer Duffy
FIT Social Media
Website: www.fitsocialmedia.ie
Phone: 00353 (86) 8492032
Email: eimer@fitsocialmedia.ie
Image of me attached

Phillip Twyord, The Curly Marketer

Eimer Duffy, FIT Social Media

LET'S GET SOCIAL

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
MARY CUNNIFFE AND COLM KIERAN

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